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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAMA 001163

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KPAL](#) [KDEM](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: BAHRAIN: PREPARING FOR THE SHARM AL SHEIKH SUMMIT

REF: STATE 141247

Classified by Charge d'Affaires Susan L. Ziadeh for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

1. (C) The Charge delivered reftel demarche concerning the Sharm Al Sheikh summit to Foreign Minister Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa in an August 10 meeting covering a number of issues. Shaikh Mohammed said the summit had not yet been rescheduled and relayed his sense that it could be put off until after the presidential election in Egypt. Shaikh Mohammed reiterated Bahrain's firm stand against terror and said that King Hamad visited London shortly after the bombings to demonstrate Arab and Muslim rejection of terror. The ForMin said progress in the peace process would allow Bahrain to take more formal steps in its relationship with Israel and noted that he had met one day earlier with Israeli MFA roving ambassador Bruce Kashdan. He was grateful for the Secretary's phone call after Bahraini Charge in Baghdad Hassan Al Ansari was wounded on July 5. Bahrain supports Iraq's development and stabilization and had welcomed Vice President Yawar in Manama recently. Shaikh Mohammed said that Iraq's neighbors had made a strong statement warning regional countries not to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs and suggested Syria and Iraq find ways to build confidence in one another on border security. End Summary.

No Date Set for Sharm Summit

2. (C) In an August 10 meeting covering several issues (septels), Charge delivered reftel demarche on preparing for the Sharm Al Sheikh summit to Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa. In response to the points, Shaikh Mohammed said that the summit had not yet been rescheduled, though he hoped it would take place soon. A complicating factor, the ForMin said, is that the Egyptian presidential election campaign period opens on August 15, and Mubarak may not want to hold the summit until after the election. Mubarak might want to avoid being accused of holding the summit for domestic political and electoral reasons. In any case, Shaikh Mohammed said, King Hamad will attend the summit whenever it is held.

Firm Stand Against Terror

3. (C) Responding to the points on terrorism, Shaikh Mohammed said that the international community needs to make a strong statement rejecting terrorism following the London and Sharm attacks. He noted that King Hamad visited London shortly after the bombings there to show that Bahrain supports the UK during this difficult time, and to demonstrate that Arab and Muslim countries stand firm against terror. Shaikh Mohammed assured the Charge that Bahrain will always speak out against terror, which threatens all countries, including Bahrain.

Hope for Israel-Palestinian Progress

4. (C) On Israel and the Palestinians, the ForMin said that Bahrain hopes the peace process will continue and that Israel's relations with the Arab world will normalize. As the peace process improves, Shaikh Mohammed said, Bahrain is ready to move forward in its relationship with Israel.

5. (C) Shaikh Mohammed said that he had met the previous day with Israel's roving ambassador, Bruce Kashdan, who is focused on solidifying Israel's international connections. The ForMin said Bahrain has had "quiet, businesslike" contacts with Israel for some time. But before Bahrain can take more public and formal steps, the people of Bahrain must feel that the situation on the ground for the Palestinians has improved. Bahrain does not want to allow an Israeli office to open and then close it in response to conflict in

Arab-Israeli relations. The situation should be stable before Bahrain establishes more formal links with Israel.

16. (C) Shaikh Mohammed stated that Bahrain would not object to a consensus on adopting a new, neutral symbol for the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, thus allowing Israel's Magen David Adom to join. This is a humanitarian issue, he said.

Bahraini Support for Iraq

17. (C) With regard to Iraq, Shaikh Mohammed said that Bahrain supports the Iraqi government, the Iraqi people, peace, economic development, and ending terror. He noted that Iraqi Vice President Ghazi Yawar had visited Bahrain recently. Bahrain considers him to be an important link to Iraq's Sunni community. The ForMin thanked the USG for its assistance following the July 5 shooting of Bahraini Charge in Iraq Hassan Al Ansari. He appreciated the Secretary's phone call. In response to the Charge's question, Shaikh Mohammed said that Bahrain "has in mind" either having Al Ansari resume his duties or appointing someone else. It was difficult to find someone willing to go to Iraq, but it could prove easier now that the GOI has said it will provide security for diplomats.

Confidence Building on Syria-Iraq Border

18. (C) On Syria, Shaikh Mohammed said that the communique from the Iraq Neighbors Conference firmly stated that bordering countries should not interfere in Iraq's domestic affairs. Syria says it is doing its best to secure its border with Iraq, but the other side disagrees. Both Syria and Iraq should work together to build confidence in one another. It was important that the instability in Iraq not spill over the border into Syria. (Note: The ForMin listened closely but did not comment directly on the points on Syrian meddling inside Lebanon. End Note.)

19. (U) Minimize considered.

ZIADEH